THE Hindu Message

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

VOL. VIII., NO. 2.] Registered No. M. 1304. THURSDAY MAY 12, 1921. [PRICE : 2 As. Annual Subscription Rs. 6

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THE HINDU MESSAGE stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

Annual Subscription Rs. 6 only.

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Single copy As. 2 only.

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A Vision of India.

THE DOVE.—I.

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B.A., B.L.

With sweetly-arched shimmering neck, O dove,
And maiden crimson-footed gait you come.
Thy shy coquettish grace doth hold me dumb.
Art thou of earth or come from heaven above ?
Thy silence teaches me the art of love
Ah me who, with the world's neglect am numb.
How can I grateful give thee crumb by crumb
When I should give myself my love to prove ?
Thou art incarnate softness, love and grace—
Three traits which our distracted hapless earth
Which human greed and hate have seemed with scars
Doth yearn to gain and keep in coming days
When reborn in love's radiant second birth
She shall be triumphant over inner wars.

Great Thoughts.

Men hail the rising sun with glee,
They love his setting glow to see,
But fail to mark that every day
In fragments bears their life away.
All Nature's face delight to view,
As changing seasons come anew ;
None sees how each revolving year
Abridges swiftly man's career.

Entangled in a hundred worldly snares,
Self-seeking men, by ignorance deluded,
Strive by unrighteous means to pile up riches.
Then, in their self-complacency they spy,
"This acquisition I have made to-day,
That will I gain to-morrow, so much pelf
Is hoarded up already, so much more
Remains that I have yet to treasure up.
This enemy I have destroyed, him also.
And others in their turn I will despatch.
I am a lord ; I will enjoy myself ;
I'm wealthy, noble, strong, successful, happy ;
I'm absolutely perfect ; no one else
In all the world can be compared to me.
Now will I offer up a sacrifice,
Give gifts with lavish hand, and be triumphant."
Such men, befooled by endless vain conceits,
Caught in the meshes of the world's illusion.
Immersed in sensuality, descend
Down to the foulest hell of unclean spirits.

Events of the Week.

Presiding at the annual meeting of the Bengal Landholders' Association, the Maharaja of Dhurbanga in the course of his speech said:—Land-holders have deep-rooted interests inextricably interwoven with those of the Government and they stand or fall together. Their history, traditions and interests make it essential for them to co-operate with Government in every way that lies in their power. We should be quite right in associating ourselves with all measures concerned with the improvement and amelioration of the lives of our people by means, such as, hand-weaving, establishment of panchayets, temperance advocacy and the like, all of which make for increased industrial prosperity of the country. He next suggested as a tentative measure the establishment of voluntary panchayets to try rent suits by arbitration as a first step towards removing the evils of litigation. He next said: We must start with a well thought out programme and we should devote our attention and energies to the creation of Village Boards. These Boards ought to take up the question of primary education, sanitation and medical relief in rural areas. It should also be their concern to start co-operative banks and to organise village agricultural and industrial committees whose look-out it would be to devise methods and measures of industrial and agricultural improvement. They may very well bestow their attention on the question of increasing the fertility of the soil and giving an impetus to cottage industries, such as spinning and weaving. With their local knowledge these Boards should be in the best position to know how to combine efficiency with economy and that combination is one of paramount importance.

* * *

The five chief demands which Amanullah, the Amir of Kabul, is putting forward, are, writes Mr. Perceval Landon in the *Daily Telegraph*, the following: (1) Payment of the accumulations of the subsidy due to Habibullah (2) Permission to import arms free of all duty; (3) The cession of Waziristan (4) The right to admit Soviet representatives into Kandahar, Ghazni and Jalalabad; and (5) The grant of a sea-port. The payment of the subsidy is indeed, goes on Mr. Perceval, neither here nor there; it is on a par with Amanullah's urgent demand that the style and and title of "His Majesty," which as granted to Habibullah shall be continued to himself. Nor is the question of import of arms likely to create friction. But the other three matters are more serious. They are largely questions of military strategy. The fourth is another item to which serious objection is taken. Bolsheviks are to be kept at a distance from India. Intelligence of the success or non-success of the Dobbs Mission to Kabul is anxiously awaited daily.

* * *

A correspondent sends the *Manchester Guardian* the following message from Rabindranath Tagore, which was sent by him as a greeting to the boys of Bembridge School, Isle of Wight:—Morning has its birds' songs and life's day-break has the music of the child. At every home comes to us this refrain of life with its pure notes of beauty. The bloom constantly is brushed off the world of man by the friction of its dirt, it is roughened and begrimed by the callous touch of age; yet there flows unobstructed the daily renewal of humanity in its ceaseless rebirths. The eternal repeats its call at man's gate in every child, and the morning's message keeps its melody unimpaired. It rouses response to-day in my heart, the life's awakening call that comes from the children's shouts and songs round me, and I feel that creation finds its own true voice in them, the creation which keeps nestled in its heart the spirit of the child.

* * *

The *Mahratta* draws attention to a small editorial in the Engineering Supplement to the *Times of India* of the 29th April. It strongly condemns the attitude of the Government and the Tatas towards the people of the Mulshi Peta. It assumes a peculiar significance in that it shows disharmony in the household of the *Times of India*. The Engineering Supplement's editor is not evidently prepared to share the mental aberrations of the Editor in chief who smells political motives in the Satyagraha of the Mavalas. The small editorial referred to completely controverts the long leaderette that had formerly appeared in the *Times of India*. Here it is:—"The position with regard to the Mulshi Peta project does not reflect a great deal of credit upon either the Government of Bombay or the Tata Hydro-Electric Company. We recognise that the project is for the eventual good of a large section of the community but that is no excuse for the dilatory manner in which Government has dealt with the matter, nor for the somewhat high-handed way in which the Company set to work. When a public Company obtains permission to flood a considerable tract of country it is morally responsible for the well-being of the inhabitants who would be evicted thereby. And it is the duty of Government either to see that the Company carries out its obligations, or to itself make suitable arrangements. In the present instance the ryots appear to have been told: "Damn you, clear out" and that is not exactly the best way of popularising irrigation and hydro-electric schemes."

* * *

From the mass of comments in the neutral Press, which are at one in denouncing the Allied "sanctions" as oppressive and injurious to neutral interests, as an attempt to square the circle, we make no apology for extracting the following. It is written by the Swedish economist, Gustav Cassel, who was also one of the experts who reported to the Brussels conference. "It seems as if the old world has decreed its own downfall. The sheerest absurdity is to be materialised. The Entente had imposed on Germany a reparations demand which in the opinion of every soberly calculating expert is altogether beyond the limits of economic possibility. The German Government replied that it could not accede to this demand, as it was impossible to fulfil it. Hereupon the Entente orders its troops to march into Germany! And this after a League of Nations and an international Court of Justice had been set up, and the Press of the whole world filled with phrases about the victory, for which the Entente fought, of right over might !!......Nothing is to be expected from any of the present political leaders of the Entente; they are bound by vain promises to electorates hypnotised by dizzy figures of milliards......But a revulsion will come with whirlwind force on the day when the public realises that depression and unemployment are the immediate consequence of the present senseless policy. It is in the interest of every one of us that this revulsion shall come quickly, before our economic life is shaken to its foundation......And how are German goods to be prevented from reaching England through neutral countries? Is the whole war-time control of neutral trade and industry to be reinstituted? It must be said at once that we shall not show so much tolerance this time as during the war, and that we can permit no restoration in any shape or form of the inquisition in our economic life......France has had up to now the advantage of the quite exceptional sympathy of the world. But it is unsafe to draw too heavy a bill on such security: it can be exhausted sooner than is imagined. The usurer's attitude has always been an unpopular one. It would excite the repulsion of the whole world if it is carried to the lengths now planned."

* * *

According to a report of the *Krasnaja Gazeta*, a Journalistic Institute has been opened in Petrograd, in connection with the "Rosta Bureau," at the end of December. Its curriculum will contain all subjects of value to journalists. In this curriculum is the political history of Europe for the last three centuries, literature, art and its social and political evolution during the last century. Moreover, political economy and statistics in social science, history of Socialism, Marxism, European State law, commercial geography, etc. As extensions of these courses, the elements of the natural sciences of the twentieth century and philosophy will be taught. Subjects of actual interest will also be taught such as the policy of the Entente, Imperialism, War, Revolution and the Organisation of the Russian Soviet Republic.

The Hindu Message

"Equality and Fraternity".

We live in an age of Reason ; at least, that is what most of us say. We want to know the reason why for everything that is told us. Says the father to his young son newly invested with the thread, "When you sit for meals, take a spoonful of water in your right palm and throw it round your plate." The son asks, "Why should I do it ?". The father says, "The Sastras say so." The son retorts, "The dictum of the Sastras has no force without a reason behind." The sire then replies with a knowing air, "That is to prevent ants and other vermin from crossing over to your plate and tasting your food." If the son is satisfied, he proceeds to obey.

The questioning spirit shows a healthy mind. In the old Upanishadic days, the student approached the teacher with his doubts. The latter suited his answer to the capacity of his questioner. The student returned with the answer, to think over it for a considerable time and make it his own. He looked at it from all points of view, thought and thought over it till he appreciated its value and if he found that it was not the *whole* truth, he went again to his Acharya and propounded his further doubts. Then came the next step towards the final solution.

Bhrigu Varuni went to his father saying 'Sir, teach me Brahman.' His father said, "That from which these things are born, that by which, when born they live, that into which they enter at their death—that is Brahman." "What is that ? queried the son. The father replied, "*Anna*—food." The son went away to think over it. He perceived that food answered to the description. All living beings were born from the fecundating fluid into which the bodily mechanism converts food ; again food is that which sustains life when beings have been born ; and at death all beings dissolve into the elements from which food springs.

It must have taken some time for the youngster to observe and think over all this by himself. This observing and thinking, the Scriptures[1] call *'making tapas'* ; and when the reflecting youth felt that though food was the basis of Life, it could not be considered as its ultimate basis he went to his father again for having his doubt explained. "Breath is Brahman" says the father this time and adds, "Do tapas—that is the way to know Brahman." The youth does so and in the course of his pursuit he finds that behind the breath is the mind that regulates the breath ; and so on and on till he is able to perceive the whole truth.

That was the old way. Now we want to know the whole truth *at once*. We will not be satisfied with half-truths. We have no time or patience to learn the whole truth bit by bit ; we do not seek to know whether our individual capacity is sufficiently advanced to grasp the whole truth at one gulp, whether it will not be necessary to proceed slowly from morsel to morsel, assimilating each bit as we get it and ruminate over it. 'What is Truth' asked Prelate of Jesus, but would not wait for an answer. Perhaps he would not have understood at once, even if he had waited for the answer. It is a long way from the first step to the final one of wisdom and there are no aeroplanes for traversing the distance at one flight. Sri Krishna says, 'बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते etc'. It takes many births of sustained effort and concentrated thought to learn the whole truth. All this is with reference to noumenal truth; but it also applies to all other truths.

But in spite of our vaunted preference for reason, we do accept many things on trust. We have to, in a great many cases. We have neither the time nor the patience to sift the evidence on which a great many truths rest. More often than not, we want the ability to study and estimate the evidence. How glibly do we, for instance, talk of the doctrine of evolution ? But have we stopped to enquire into the evidence for it ? Most of us do not even care to know how the doctrine has been modified successively after Darwin had enunciated it or whether we have reached the final form in which it should be presented.

The doctrine of 'Fraternity and Equality' is another of such truths. 'We, men, are all the children of God. We are thus all brothers and equal.'—it sounds so convincing at first sight. It, therefore, needs no further thought ; and anyone who dares to question its truth or even probe the reasons on which it stands is voted a cross-grained faddist. Admitting for argument's sake that God has created us all, is each individual man an act of special creation and is God incessantly engaged in turning out men and sending them forth into this world ? Does He not similarly create other living beings than man ? Are not asses and other beasts, venomous reptiles and other ferocious pests equally the creation of God ? If they are, are they not our brothers as well and therefore equal with us ? If they are not, how do they come into existence and cannot men be equally brought into being ? Theologians of all religions have attempted to solve these questions ; but even within the same religion, they hopelessly differ.

Equality may be lovely as an ideal, but it appears to be wholly unrelated to the matter-of-fact world in which we live. Taking mere birth into consideration, are all sentient beings, from plant to man, of equal birth ? Speaking of man alone, are

1. The Taitt. Up.—Bhrigu Valli

all men of equal birth—equipped equally at birth, physically, mentally or morally? Why should one be born with defective senses, lame, blind, deaf or dumb or weak, infirm and puny for no fault of his and another strong and physically perfect? Why should one be born with an inherent tendency to evil and another, in the same family, and even of the same parents, with a natural leaning for all that is good and noble and beautiful? Why should one be born among savages living on human flesh and another in a community with exalted notions of right and wrong, one in surroundings favourable to a healthy physical and moral growth and another in an atmosphere antagonistic to everything that makes for righteousness? Birth brings with it in some cases untold facilities for a bright and moral life as it brings in others insurmountable difficulties which make of life an endless despair and desolation. If such are the results of birth, can it be said to be a mere accident? If it were, all life, all nature is chance; and how can chance be compatible with the fatherhood of an All-wise Being? Equality by birth would thus appear to be a pious myth.

Let that go. What about equality of opportunities and equality of treatment! Do all have equal opportunities in life or given equal opportunities, do or can all profit equally? Do those who are better-placed, with all their democratic veneer, accord to the less-favoured the same rights, privileges or opportunities which they themselves have? Do those who talk of dispensing justice without distinction of race or creed or language ever think of doing it when the need for sanctimonious theories is gone? As Prof. W. A. Brown remarks in the Hibbert Journal in reference to the War, "Tested by each one of its cardinal principles, Christianity seems hopelessly to have broken down. Whatever else one may or may not include in Christianity, this, at least it has meant to those who have accepted it in the past; the Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of man, Redemption through Christ, and the leadership of the Church. And yet, how unreal and far away seems each of these when measured by the grim realities of the present. How can any one speak of the Fatherhood of God in any universal and all-embracing sense in the light of the terrible calamities which have fallen upon so many innocent sufferers all over the round world? How can we believe in the goodness of God when one contemplates this unexampled harvest of agony, of bitterness and of death? How the whole dilemma that in every age has haunted the imagination of man—either God would not and then he is not good or He could not and then he is not in control—how this dilemma has been sharpened until it seems as if it could not be evaded.........The case is still more disheartening when we pass to the second great article of the Christian faith, the Brotherhood of man. For what we seem to see today is a colossal denial, on the part of that part of the human race which has been longest under the influence of Christ and which alone definitely calls itself Christian, of this central and cardinal conviction."

All this discrepancy arises, because equality is only a theory albeit attractive, whereas inequality is a fact. Other religions get over the inequality between man and the lower animals by supposing that man alone has a soul while the latter have not. This supposition will not bear a moment's scrutiny. All living beings, even plants as Sir. J. C. Bose is showing to the not easily convinced world of Science, have pretty much the same feelings as man and are guided by an instinct which is only another name for inherited experience and ratiocinative assimilation. But arguments seldom convince; nor is there any finality about them. Let us now see what Hinduism has to teach on these points.

Not only in man but in all forms of life, from the lowest to the highest, (in fact, even in dead matter, which appears to possess no consciousness) two principles are associated; one is the Spirit and the other is the material vehicle which enshrines it. When the association commenced, we cannot say; but that they are associated, we see. In fact, the question of 'when' is a figment, due to the limitations of mind, which can only think in terms of time, place and relation. The spirit is uniform, unchanging, and unchangeable. The material vehicle, in which it is embodied, consists of two[1] vestures. The outer vesture is the material body, renewed from birth to birth. The inner vesture known as *Sukshmadeha* (subtle body) is made of finer matter, which becomes finer and finer as purity of thought and deed acts upon it and coarser and coarser under the influence of impure thought and deed. When at death, the outer body is thrown aside, the subtle body assimilates its earth-experience and after such assimilation seeks and finds an outer vehicle in harmony with its own fineness or coarseness and comes back to this earth if it has not become fit for a higher sphere of existence. All this takes place under laws as uniform as the laws of the physical world. The outer embodiment is an index of the fineness or coarseness of the inner vehicle. Birth is thus not an accident but the result of past experience and assimilation; the surroundings in which the subtle vesture finds re-entrance into earth-life are determined by an immutable law of Nature. Brahman atmosphere, purified by a hereditary course of discipline and self-control was regarded as the most favourable for the further progress in refinement and re-entrance into such atmosphere could be earned only when the *Sukshma Sarira* had fitted itself for it by its previous experiences. Birth in a family noted for its succession of great and good men was thus one, not easily acquired and it was an indication of past-lives, lived well and nobly. As that great Scientist, the late Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace put it, "Our existence in this world is really but one of the many stages in an endless career and the thoughts we think and the deeds we do here will certainly affect our condition and the very form and organic expression of our personality hereafter." Our present birth is as much determined by our past as our present way of living will determine our future re-incarnation. As Sri Krishna says,[1] 'Never doth any one who worketh righteousness tread the path of woe; he is

1 Three, if we take into account the original seed separately—*Karanadeha.*

1. Gita, VI—40 to 45.

re-born in a pure and blessed family and recovering the characteristics belonging to his previous birth, he again laboureth for perfection.'

When the Brahman lived the life of rigid abstinence laid down for him of old, birth in a Brahman house, noted for its hereditary purity, was considered a rare privilege, acquired after births of striving after perfection. But even at the time referred to in that well-known passage of Mahabharata,[2] the Brahman had fallen from his ancient ideals. When the Yaksha asked Yudhisthira, 'If, as you say, conduct is the test of a Brahman, birth would be of no avail as a criterion in the absence of pure conduct,' Yudishthira is stated to have replied, 'yes It is by his conduct that a Brahman is now known. It is difficult to discriminate birth in the present condition of humanity, on account of confusion of castes.' If things stood thus at the time of this episode, they are worse now. At the best of times, birth was only one of the defining marks of brahmanhood, the other three being *sruta* (sacred learning), *tapas* (abstinence) and *charya* (purity of conduct); in the stress of modern conditions, birth, even as a partial test has long ceased to be operative.

All the same, birth, at no time, is a mere accident; for it brings with it great potentialities for good or evil, which training and early associations foster and develop. All the world over, in all races and countries, the future of an individual is very largely determined by the innate refinement which the re-incarnated individual brings with him from before birth. A thousand births of refinement and striving may separate one man from another. All living beings are undergoing this process from life to life; one has striven upwards for myraids of births and is now in an advanced stage of spiritual enlightenment; another is just beginning at the lowest rung.

Whether this is the correct interpretation of Life is a question to be solved by each man according to his faith or capacity for understanding. For the Hindu, so long as he remains one, this is or should be one of his cardinal articles of faith. In the light of this doctrine, we can see that when we look exclusively to the Spirit underlying each individual entity, human or otherwise, there is no difference between one living being and another. It is in this view that the Mahabharata[1] says, "Wisdom consists in looking with an equal eye on a Brahman, distinguished for pure birth and learning, a chandala, an ox, an elephant or a dog; for in all things, both those that move and that cannot, dwells the One Spirit whereby this universe has been stretched out." This, however, is the transcendental standpoint, valid only for the few who are advanced enough to penetrate behind the phenomenal and realise the Absolute. For all the rest, it is the practical every-day world that matters and here an individual man means nothing more than the material form in which the Spirit is embodied, with a distinct corporeal vesture and a definite mental development. In this aspect, no two beings are alike, either by birth or by endowment.

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2. Vanaparva, Yaksha prasna.
1. Parva XII Cf. Gita V—18.

Ireland.

By S. P. Thiaga Rajan.

The Government of Mr. Lloyd George has obviously got out of its depth. The growing defections from the Coalition, the resignation of Mr. Bonar Law pointing to difficulties with the Unionist rank and file, these and a variety of other considerations seem to indicate the possibility of the speedy dethronement of Mr. Lloyd George—a contingency which may happen any day if the Independent Liberals and the Labourites, in fact all the progressive forces of the country —"those of any real and vital Liberalism and those of Labour alike"—can agree on a *modus operandi*; which ought not to be difficult in view of British Labour's unqualified disavowal of the Moscow Internationale by an overwhelming majority. Mr. Lloyd George, with that adroitness in handling social and political forces, has not been slow to perceive this: and hence he has begun conjuring up dreams of an England going plump down the maw of Communism, Red Revolution etc. Opinion in the great manufacturing districts is getting impatient at persistence in a "policy of shifts without principles." A neutral journalist in the metropolis thinks the resignation of Mr. Law will hasten fresh and healthier groupings in politics. The *Times*, true barometer of public feeling, speaks of the country's weariness of "wandering in a wilderness of compromises." The stinging words of reproach uttered by Lord R. Cecil in the Commons may be within our readers' recollection. His constituency has set its seal upon his action: and his speech there indicates in an embryonic form a way out of the present confusion of politics and parties. Nor need this disgust and disquiet be a matter for wonder. The present Ministry,—the personal adherents of Mr. George have come in for a goodly share of official plums in its recent reshuffling—originally came into power as a result of the intrigues of its Chief against his former colleagues; and Mr. Lloyd George is behaving true to the forecast which, writing on the Cabinet crisis of December, 1916, I ventured to draw in the columns of a Ceylon journal. The demoralisation and defection in the ranks of its opponents have continued to plant it firm in the saddle. But, as Rosebery has put it somewhere, the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob may effect a successful imposture, but can hardly constitute a durable administration. And the Coalition's difficulties are coming in thick and fast. In the House of Commons, despite their immense majority, the Government have on more than one occasion come very near to defeat and that though by far the most difficult part of their programme has yet to be reached.

All the great testing issues, Reparations, Ireland, the fiscal question cannot now be dealt with; nor is it necessary. We shall confine our attention to Ireland. The following telegrams from Reuter appear in the newspapers of the week:

London, May 2.—Lord Talbot, now Viscount Fitzalan was sworn in to the Viceroyalty of Ireland, by the Privy Council, at Dublin Castle to-day. The ceremonial was quaint and took place in private. Viscount Fitzalan, accompanied by her Ladyship arrived at Kingstown, in the early morning and was greeted by newspaper sellers who have welcomed every Viceroy for the last fifty years. His Excellency shook hands with an old man.

London; May 2,— It is officially stated that three policemen and four Sinn Feiners were killed in affrays in South Ireland, during the week end.

London, May 1.—The Dail Eireann has issued a proclamation declaring that the Government of Ireland Act, 1920,

is illegal and ordering members of County Councils and other bodies to ostracise elections for the proposed Irish Senate. The Dail Eireann however countenances popular elections under the Act.

The appointment of Lord Edmund Talbot, Unionist Chief Whip, is the first time in modern history when a Roman Catholic has been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Were Irish nationalism a religious movement, it may be possible to hope for much from it. But, not religious distinctions but claims of a people's national right are the bases of Sinn Fein. Yet Ireland would be grateful did it come as the sign of a new policy or the crown of a compact of friendship and co-operation. The appointment ought to be a symbol and a promise of reconciliation. A sturdy Liberal Journalist thinks that it is neither: and as he wisely observes, everything depends on the policy which lies behind it. And here we touch the second of the telegrams. Readers of the daily sheets would have been sick of reading of the "fell satanic orgies" going on in Ireland, of reprisals and murders, murders and reprisals. And this the Government dignifies by the name of a policy. The recent debates in Parliament will have convinced the reader of even the meagre telegraphic reports thereof that the government are not disposed to retreat from the scandalous position in which they have placed themselves. On that policy, the *Manchester Guardian* has the following comments:—The whole policy of the Government hitherto has rested upon lawless violence. It is a policy of terror, designed, no doubt, to meet and defeat a corresponding policy of terror on the part of its opponents, but impossible to be justified on that or any other ground. A Government which by the very fact of its existence rests upon law and controls the whole machinery of the law and of executive power cannot permanently rule by giving licence to its agents to kill, to burn, and to destroy.

Well, such a policy can be persisted in only so long as it can be denied and to some extent concealed. We extracted in these columns last week a paragraph from the *Nation* (London) to show how many damaging admissions really emerge from the thick fog in which Sir Hamar Greenwood would fain hide the Irish happenings. And it has now become practically impossible to hide or conceal any longer the state of war, of lawless war that goes on in Ireland. America has opened, with the blessing of its chief Magistrate, a relief fund of ten million dollars to repair the damage which England is daily inflicting on Ireland and to compensate the sufferers. What an army of foreign agents and distributors of this vast sum will swarm into Ireland and what an *enormous agency* of publicity will thus be set in motion! As it is, a committee had been sitting for some time in New York to enquire into the actual conditions in Ireland and the proceedings of the agents of the Government; and it has issued a damaging report of which, we are told, half a million copies are being distributed as a beginning. Even sensitive English critics admit that "the American enquiry into the competition in murder and arson in Ireland was of respectable private origin" and further "believe it has been a serious attempt to get at the truth and not to raise or envenom international spite." The *Manchester Guardian* publishes the conclusions of that Commission: and we may add one word in giving them here. Senators, governors of states, mayors and leading citizens, editors, professors and bishops were invited to take part in the Commission, and over 150 accepted membership. Attempts were made to get evidence from every side, but the Commission regrets that the efforts to get the views of Ulster and British officialdom in Ireland were unsuccessful.

The Commission's conclusions are as follows:

We find that the Irish people are deprived of the protection of British law, to which they would be entitled as subjects of the British King. They are likewise deprived of the moral protection granted by international law to which they would be entitled as belligerents. They are at the mercy of Imperial British forces which, acting contrary both to all law and to all standards of human conduct, have instituted in Ireland a "terror" the evidence regarding which seems to prove that

1. The Imperial British Government has created and introduced into Ireland a force of at least 78,000 men, many of them youthful and inexperienced and some of them convicts, and has incited that force to unbridled violence.

2. The Imperial British forces in Ireland have indiscriminately killed innocent men, women, and children; have discriminately assassinated persons suspected of being Republicans; have tortured and shot prisoners while in custody, adopting the subterfuges of "refusal to halt" and "attempting to escape"; and have atttibuted to alleged "Sinn Fein extremists" the British assassination of prominent Irish Republicans.

3. House-burning and wanton destruction of villages and cities by Imperial British forces under Imperial British officers have been countenanced, and ordered by officials of the British Government; and elaborate provision by gasoline sprays and bombs has been made in a number of instances for systematic incendiarism as part of a plan of terrorism.

4. A campaign for the destruction of the means of existence of the Irish people has been conducted by the burning of factories, creameries, crops, and farm implements and the shooting of farm animals. This campaign is carried on regardless of the political view of their owners, and results in widespread and acute suffering among women and children.

5. Acting under a series of proclamations issued by the competent military authorities of the Imperial British forces, hostages are carried by forces exposed to the fire of the Republican army; fines are levied upon towns and villages as punishment for alleged offences of individuals; private property is destroyed in reprisals for acts with which the owners have no connection; and the civilian population is subjected to an inquisition upon the theory that individuals are in possession of information valuable to the military forces of Great Britain. These acts of the Imperial British forces are contrary to the laws of peace or war among modern civilised nations.

6. This "terror" has failed to re-establish Imperial British civil government in Ireland. Throughout the greater part of Ireland British courts have ceased to function; local country, and city governments refuse to recognise British authority: and British civil officials fill no function of service to the Irish people.

7. In spite of the British "terror" the majority of the Irish people having sanctioned by ballot the Irish Republic,

give their allegiance to it, pay taxes to it, and respect the decisions of its courts and of the civil officials.

The religious issue in Ireland is summarried as follows:—

1. Outside of a part of Ulster, Catholics and Protestants live in peace and harmony and their political opinions are not primarily a matter of religion.

2. Even in Ulster religious bigotry is not by any means wholly spontaneous, but is artificially stirred up by those whose economic and Political interests are served by dividing the people.

3. While it obviously lies beyond our province to pass final judgment upon the various aspects of the Ulster issue, we have not only a right but a duty as American Protestants to denounce the degradation of religion by such pogroms as occurred last summer. Upon this subject we owe it to our fellow-religionists both in America and in Ulster to speak plainly.

As for the religions issue, the first of the Commission's conclusions is borne out amply by the fact that, among leaders of Irish Nationalism, none were more conspicuous nor more honoured in their days and since than Parnell and Isaac Butt, both of them "on the right side" in religion. As Shaw so well puts it, England in Ireland is the Pope's policeman and perhaps, as he avers, were the clumsy thumb of British militarism removed from Ireland, the Pope may find it difficult to get acquiescence, unthinking support, among the Irish intelligentsia. As for the moral protection to which all belligerents are entitled, of which the Commission speaks, it is interesting to recall what De Valera told a representative of the Universal Press Service of America as to the relations between his Government and the armed forces of the religion. "One of the first acts of the Sinn Fein Government," he said "was to take over control of the voluntary armed forces of the nation from the Irish Volunteers, We fashioned the Irish Republican Army to be the military arm of the Government. This army is therefore a regular State force under the civil control of the elected representatives of the people, with organisation and discipline imposed by those representatives and under officers who hold their commissions under warrant from these representatives. The (Sinn Fein) Government is therefore responsible for the actions of this army. These actions are not the acts of irresponsible individuals or groups, nor is the I. R. A., as the enemy would have one believe, a preætorian guard. It is a national army of defence."

Is there a door of escape out of this *impasse* other than a sanguinary struggle? Darkness envelopes the recent mission of Lord Derbey. But De Valera had spoken out earlier, in his St. Patrick's Day Message, of the possibilities of peace. Denying that any offers had been made to the responsible leaders of Ireland which could be accepted as the basis of negotiation, He continued that there can be peace tomorrow if England will simply refrain from her aggressions. Ireland, he said, was putting the principles for which the late war was fought to the test. Those principles were not lost at Paris. Ireland was keeping them alive. He said, England is trying to win by playing on human weakness. As a matter of fact, though she does not realise it, England is playing not on the weakest but on the strongest quality of the Irish people—their spiritual quality. The young men of Ireland are saying to themselves: 'At best the span of life is only 70 years. We must all die, so why not now and in circumstances like these? Never, perhaps, as by dying in such a cause as is Ireland's could we do so much for the world." England may try to pretend that men like those who were executed at Mountjoy are murderers, She will find it much harder than she imagines to get the world to accept that view.

And here we come to the last of the Reuter's telegrams quoted. The mandate of the Republican Government, it will be seen, does not prohibit popular elections under the Act. These members will never sit as a Parliament, since they will never take the oath of allegiance. Sanguine pressmen in England seem to think that this will, however, open the way for an honourable peace with Ireland. Before such a happy consummation can arrive, it would be necessary to send the present Cabinet home double-quick, we presume. We can only conclude with an extract from the *Manchester Guardian*. "The refuge of incompetence is force. It is tempting because it seems easy. It can be quickly applied, and it therefore evades the painful process of thought. We are getting plenty of it just now, and are likely to get more. Ireland has long been a favourite field; it is now the turn of Germany. There are occasions when force is indeed a remedy. Force must often be met by force. It was so met during the late war, and with final though desperately costly success. But it should be the last remedy, not the first, and to be always running to it is the mark of the bully or the imbecile. It is the almost sure index of the failure of statesmanship. That is what we are now seeing in both the most important political fields. Of Ireland it is hardly necessary to speak. For months past it has been known that a settlement has been possible on terms consistent alike with the interests of the United Kingdom as a whole and with the repeated declarations of Mr. Lloyd George. There is every reason to believe that it could at this moment be accomplished if, in addition to the powers conferred by the Government Home Rule Act, complete fiscal autonomy were granted to the Southern Parliament, which would of course involve a similar concession to the Northern. Yet, for whatever reason, the Government persists in refusing this perfectly safe concession, and prefers to incur all the immense discredit and the very real and increasing international danger which persistence in its present entirely hopeless policy involves.

The Nadiad Municipality by a majority of nine to four resolved to conduct Municipal primary schools independently of Government control and refused grant from Government. The Collector of Kaira requested the Municipality to reconsider its resolution in view of its straitened finance. At the second meeting the Municipality by a majority of 10 to 6 confirmed the previous decision with the proposal that it would supplement its resources by donations and other similar methods. The Government of Bombay directed enquiries to be made of the Municipality whether it would make prompt payment of salaries to existing staff if it retained it and if it proposed to engage separate staff when the existing staff should be withdrawn, at the same time pointing out that it had already drawn two-thirds of the current year's grant. The Municipality again expressed the decision to nationalise its schools and wished to engage separate staff independently of Government, stating that its action was based on the express wish of rate-payers and in accordance with the resolution of the Nagpur Congress. The Government in their order observed there was nothing to show that rate-payers were

ever consulted and without wishing to interfere with the experiment, expressed their opinion that it would have been wiser to introduce the change gradually taking the whole public into confidence. While approving of the Municipality's proposal, the Government stated that the power of control vested in the Government should remain unimpaired, that rights of the existing staff should be fully safe-guarded and facilities offered for the children of those parents who do not wish to send them to Municipal schools.

Mr. G. B. Trivedi, a prominent Bombay Liberal and M. L. C. was sometime ago in Karachi and gives the impressions he formed of non-co-operators there in the pages of the *Indian Social Reformer*. The reader will see what a refreshing contrast he provides to Mr. Srinivasa Sastri's aberrations. Here are Mr. Trivedi's conclusions:—"There is real awakening even amongst the masses. The time for ridiculing the (non-co-operation) movement has passed. Repression will strengthen rather than wipe it out. The best statesmanship both on the part of co-operators and the Government is to go and find out the real grievences and understanding them from the Indian point of view to remedy them. Indifference and callousness will only drive the sufferers to the rank of discontents. I believe it is the duty of Liberals to go amongst our own people. People may be non-co-operators but after all they are our own kith and kin. If they find that you go to them out of real spirit of sympathy and service they will welcome you and explain to you the situation. It is then for you to put the grievences before the authorities and see that they are removed. This is real co-operation, real mediation between the governors and governed. If we cannot do this and merely go on abusing and laughing at non-co-operation, we cannot but deserve Lalaji's strong condemnation. I welcome it as a trumpet sound to awaken the Liberals from their lethargy. Undaunted and unmindful of vilifications and mis-understandings, let us mix more freely amongst real sufferers and bring to them understanding and relief. Thus only can the Liberals justify their existence. Do not be afraid of the people. Trust in them. They are yours. If they find that you are sympathetic and sincere in your wishes to serve the people, they will welcome you, be you clad in Khadi or not."

A contributor in these pages spoke last week of the illusions of the great War creeping forth so early. A French writer, the well-informed "Pertinax" who often sees both deep and far, writes in the *Echo de Paris* that the "Wilson legacy" should be ruthlessly scrapped if America can thus be induced to cast in her lot with the Allies. His observations give one an excellent idea of the diplomatic temperature of the hour. "The best we can do is to declare to America—Act as you will. In the Treaty, the notorious pact displeases you more than anything. Tear up all that does not suit you; the articles 3, 10, 16, and 23, votes, territorial guarantees, measures of coercion and colonial mandates. What do we care? They are all mere shadows and inefficacious phantoms. Correct them at your discretion. Let as much remain of the League of Nations as is indispensable for the application of the Treaty. We care nothing for the rest."

The International Red Cross Societies have decided to urge all Governments to sign an agreement in addition to the Hague Convention for:—(1) The complete prohibition of the use of poison gas in warfare; (2) the limitation of hostilities by air to strictly military purposes; (3) the safeguarding of the civil population and the prevention of useless destruction by the strict observance of the laws and customs of the second Hague Convention, which forbids the shelling of undefended places, such places to be defined in the agreement. The Conference also invites the Governments of the world to consider the limitation of the right to enforce blockade. A mandate was given to the Commission to intervene in the case of civil wars, the Conference expressing the hope that propaganda in all countries would emphasise the neutral and impartial character of the Red Cross which should make such intervention practicable.

Social and Religious.

The Bhagavad Gita.

With an English Exposition

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

(The substance of the lectures delivered at the Students' Sanatana Dharma Sabha Trichinopoly.)

ADHYAYA VI.

(*continued.*)

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छसि ॥ ४० ॥

The Blessed Bhagavan said:

Verily, O Partha, neither in this world nor in the other world is there destruction for him; for the doer of an auspicious action, O my son, never reaches an evil end.

NOTES

1. A beautiful Sanskrit stanza says that concentrated Brahma Vichara includes and transcends all other meritorious acts.

स्नातं तेन समस्ततीर्थसलिले सर्वापि दत्तावनि-
यज्ञानां च कृतं सहस्रमखिला देवाश्च संपूजिताः ।
संसाराच्च समुद्धृताः स्वपितरस्त्रैलोक्यपूज्योऽप्यसौ
यस्य ब्रह्मविचारणे क्षणमपि स्थैर्यं मनः प्राप्नुयात् ॥

प्राप्य पुण्यकृताँल्लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१ ॥
अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ ४२ ॥

Having attained the realms of the doers of righteous actions and having lived there for immemorial years, he who fell from Yoga is reborn in a pure and prosperous home.

Or else he is born into a family of wise yogins; Verily such a birth is very rare to obtain in this world.

NOTES

1. Thus in the case of those who die before going through all the seven yogic *Bhumis* to which I have already referred, there are powerful aids to the achievement of perfections in a latter birth. The latter state is even higher and rarer than the former.

शिलोञ्छवृत्त्या परितुष्टचित्तो
धर्मं महान्तं विरजं जुषाणः ।
मय्यर्पितात्मा गृह एव तिष्ठन्
नातिप्रसक्तः समुपैति शान्तिम् ॥

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदैहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ ४३ ॥
पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ ४४ ॥
प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ ४५ ॥

There he recovers union with the faculty of discrimination acquired in his former body, and

strives more than before for perfection, O son of the Kurus.

By his former practice alone, he is irresistibly impelled. Even the yogic enquirer transcends the world of works.

The yogi striving assiduously, cleansed of all taint, gradually gaining perfection through many births, attains the highest goal.

NOTES

1. It was the force of previous yoga that swept Prahlada on its current over paternal obstruction to reach the lotus-feet of God.

2. Sri Madhusoodana says well: अकस्मादेव भोगवासनाभ्यो व्युत्थाप्य मोक्षसाधनोन्मुखः क्रियते ।

3. शब्दब्रह्म—is interpreted by Sri Ramanujacharya as meaning Prakriti. The stanza is interpreted by him as meaning that the *yogi* attains the realisation of the Jeeva which transcends Prakriti. प्रकृतिबन्धाद्विमुक्तो ऽदेवमनुष्यादिशब्दाभिलापानर्हं विज्ञानानन्दैकतानमात्रं आत्मानं प्राप्नोतीत्यर्थः

4. The author of *Gita Vivriti* explains Sabda Brahma as meaning the totality of rules of *Vidhi* and *Nishedha*. Thus according to the Dwaita school the stanza means that the man of realised yoga goes beyond the plane of obligatory action.

The First Step in the Vedanta.

"Person" versus "Thing."

By B. KRISHNASWAMY AIYAR, M.A., B.L.

JNANA AND KARMA MARGAS CONTRASTED.

17. I may state here once for all that our Shastraic system prescribes both the methods leaving it to the aspirant to choose either of them according to his own qualifications and tendencies. The methods prescribing the process against the current in all the stages can be comprehensively brought under what is called "Jnana Marga." The with-the-current process is called "Karma Marga." The former method is certainly the more logical, scientific and effective, but circumstanced as we are that method it is for us certainly more difficult, and it is the privilege of only a very few who can afford to follow it. The Karma Marga is more adapted to our requirements and qualifications and does not require any effort up the current, and it is therefore the more practicable one for us.

SACRIFICE.

18. Now to the question before us. I have said that the sense of possession is obscured when the effort is diverted to some other object. It is a curious fact in the ordination of God's Universe that, if you want to exert yourself for obtaining a particular object, you *must* part with something of what you have already got before you so exert yourself and irrespective of the result of your exertion. I can find no better parallel than our University which demands an application fee for any examination that the student may wish to undergo. The student may not afterwards be permitted to sit for the examination owing to some defect in his term certificate. The student may attend the examination but may not answer the question papers. He may answer the question papers but the examiners may not find his answers satisfactory and he may find his name in the list of failed candidates. But the University rule is inflexible:—"In no case will the fee be refunded." Such also is the rule in the Universe. God is not such a bad trader as to have any credit system in his shop. He could at least be content to have cash down on delivery. But no. He knows his own customers too well to trouble himself about them unless he has positive evidence of their earnestness to obtain the things desired in their readiness to deposit a premium. It is a condition precedent to your raising crops that you should throw away the seeds. Your sense of possession over the seeds must give way to permit of your exertion to obtain the crops. You cannot say I will part with the seeds after I am sure of the harvest. If you want your money to double itself by the accumulation of interest, you must part with the money and pass it on to the possession of a needy debtor. You cannot tell him "Bring me the doubled capital seven years later and I will pay you the money then." You will have to part with the money now and take the chance of his repaying or not the same with interest later on. You cannot hug to yourself whatever you have got and at the same time exert yourself to obtain more.

ACTIVITY CLASSIFIED.

19. The Hindu Shastras utilise this fact as a handy opportunity for the aspirant to get rid of his sense of possession ममता. They prescribe several activities by engaging yourself in which you will be able to rid yourself of this ममता. The activities are various and have to be various regard being had to the varied nature of the tendencies and qualifications of the aspirants and to the varied depths and kinds of their ममता. As I have said, all fruitful activities do require some sacrifice of our possessions. The function of the Shastras is to define the activities and prescribe the sacrifice required for them. In so doing they classify activities in general under two main heads; those which help the aspirant in his progress towards the realisation of the truth and those which take him farther and farther away from it. The former the Shastras commend and prescribe, the latter they condemn and prohibit. The former are called विहितकर्म and the latter प्रतिषिद्धकर्म. It is true that in both these classes of activities there is to some extent the abandonment of ममता, but in the prohibited activities the abandonment is not complete and the ममता is only in abeyance and not extinguished. Suppose somebody tells me that I am ugly. If my identification with my body is as usual complete, I will at once resent the observation and I may be fool enough to slap him on the face for that remark. If he is equally spirited, we will be fighting with each other in no time. If you analyse my mind at the time of fighting, you will find that I do not care a bit whether my body receives the blows of my opponent so long as I am able to give him some blows. That is, in my efforts to injure my opponent, I would lose the ममता over my body so far as to risk its being actually hurt. Please remember that I expose the body to actual physical hurt to give vent to the resentment engendered by a mere intangible wordy attack upon it. This loss of ममता at the instant of fighting is undergone only for the purpose of vindicating the ममता itself, so that whether I win or lose in the fight, the ममता will reassert itself with greater force as soon as the restraint is withdrawn. This explains why the greatest criminals sometimes rank with the greatest saints in the extent of the sacrifices made by them; the difference only lies in the nature of the activities which demanded such sacrifices.

OBJECT OF ACTIVITY.

20. That the object of the Shastras in prescribing certain activities is only to get a reduction in ममता may be seen from the fact the greater the extent of ममता the more numerous are the activities prescribed, the greater the possessions the greater is the sacrifice required. A consideration of the several activities themselves is beyond the scope of this short presentation. I may however mention that in the noblest of activities prescribed as in the meanest of them, this element of abandonment of ममता is ever prominent. A Yajna has its important ritual in the actual oblation to the Deity sought to be pleased thereby. But no amount of इन्द्राय स्वाहा or इन्द्राय इदं "This I give to Indra" will make the oblation perfect unless it is followed by the two significant words न मम "No more mine."

Having so far considered the second stage of activities, I shall now pass on to the third stage of desire.

REGULATION OF ACTIVITIES.

21. (iii) A cessation of activities will be brought about by stepping the desire that necessitated them for satisfying itself. The suppression and final extinction of desire will certainly be the most effective means of doing it, but, as remarked already, it is beyond the competence of most of us who must content to tread the easier Karma Marga. The latter does not attempt at once to dam up desire but seeks to divert it into a different channel or limit it to a particular channel. Suppose my servant is working under me only with a desire to get the few rupees that I give him for his pay. If another should offer him a higher salary, he would certainly desire *that* in preference to his present pay, and the result will be that his working under me will cease. Suppose again my servant in his enthusiasm to serve me engages himself in all sorts of activities thereby intruding himself where he is not wanted or where he may injure himself. I may have to then tell him "please limit your activities to such as I prescribe. You need not fear that your pay will be any the less for such limitation. On the other hand I will reward you if you acquit yourself well in those duties which I prescribe." Such again is the function of our Shastras. They recognise that as long as the basic confusion of the person with the non-person called अविद्या is not completely gone it will be impossible to put an end to the activities of the aspirant. They therefore take upon themselves the function of regulating those activities. In doing so, the regulation is so arranged that the activities themselves in course of time help the aspirant on to the higher stages of non-desire. An unmarried man desirous of sexual intercourse may consider and look upon all women as fit objects of enjoyment and may exert himself for the satisfaction of his desire. The Shastras step in and say "You will only be hurting yourself if you engage yourself in such activities. Your desire to have sexual intercourse is certainly legitimate I will prescribe for you a method by which you can have that desire satisfied and which at the same time will benefit you morally and spiritually. Please undergo the ceremony of marriage with a particular woman and live with her." A poor man seeing rich people apparently enjoying manifold pleasures desires wealth and engages himself in all sorts of activities to obtain it. The Shastra intervenes and says "If you commit deceit, robbery or other such acts for obtaining wealth, you will be injuring yourself. Please give up those activities. I will prescribe for you other non-injurious methods by which you can obtain the same wealth. In following the methods that I prescribe you will in addition to obtaining the wealth be profitting yourself otherwise also." This regulation of activities with a view to the ultimate abandonment of desire is, I may even say, the sole function of the Karma Marga Shastras. I have mentioned that the activities are regulated by diversion into a different course or by a limitation in the particular course itself. When the Shastras adopt the former method they are said to prescribe अपूर्वविधि and when the latter method is prescribed it goes by the name of नियमविधि. In either of these methods the desire to obtain the object is already there. The Shastras do not create the desire but only prescribe beneficial methods of satisfying it. If, for example, they give the command स्वर्गकामो यजेत "One who desires heaven shall perform Yajna," it is not at all their object to compel any one to perform Yajna much less to compel him to desire heaven. That the main object of the Shastras in prescribing such activities is not the satisfaction of the desire itself but really a cessation of that desire is shown by the fact that even while prescribing the activities they attach greater importance to निष्कामकर्म "desireless action" than to more काम्यकर्म "desire ful action" and also by the fact that even in the case of काम्यकर्म they insist on the observance of the formula ब्रह्मार्पणमस्तु, "Let this be dedicated to Brahman" at the end of the action or Karma.

REGULATION OF DESIRES.

22, (iv). We will certainly be putting an effective step to the desire of a particular thing if we should realise that the thing is not really desirable. But it would require a considerable amount of self-control to get such a realisation when we have so long accustomed ourselves to look upon it as desirable. While the Jnana Marga therefore wants to inculcate in us non desire or वैराग्य in the thing by exposing to us its faults and its undesirability generally, the Karma Marga seeks to wean us away form the object desired by tempting us with higher objects of desire. I shall not have to explain this process as it is the experience of every one of us that we are ready to give up desire for any particular object if by doing so we will be able to get another thing more desirable. The money kept in the box of the neighbour may seem more desirable than the small sum in my own, and I may be willing to part with the latter if I am guaranteed my neighbour's money. But if I give full scope to that desire and begin to act under its promptings, I shall soon find myself in the criminal jail. There arises therefore the necessity for regulation of desires for telling us what are the desires to a fulfilment of which we can legitimately aspire in view of our persent circumstances and environments and qualifications. The Shastras accordingly inform us what things are legitimately desirable and what are not As the desirability or otherwise depends not on the thing itself but on the capacity of the aspirant to work for it and the facilities that he has for so working and also on his capacity to enjoy it, it necessarily follows that what is desirable for a particular person may not be so desirable for another and may even be undesirable for a third. That is why the Shastras are so particular about the Adhikara of any person to do any act for the satisfaction of his desire. If I am healthy and thirsty, a tumbler of cold water will be neeessary, if I am healthy but only tired, the cold water may not be necessary but it may be desirable; if I am healthy and not even tired, the cold water is unnecessary but it can do me no harm; but if I am unhealthy the same cold water, which was necessary, desirable or indifferent to me according to my several conditions, will become positively harmful and I must not be allowed to take it even if I am scorching with thirst and clamorously call for it. It is this Adhikara-bheda or difference in competency that is the basis of the Hindu system of Varnas and Ashramas

The Karma Marga, by promising you higher pleasures in the life to come or even in this life, induces in you a sense of relatively higher desirability in them than in the things actually desired by you now. The aspirant who has learnt that the pleasures of heaven are more desirable than the best that can be obtained here will naturally give up the desire for the latter and aspire to obtain the higher pleasures. The Universe is therefore composed of an ever ascending ladder of pleasures even unto the highest step when the aspirant can enter the region of the Creator Himself and claim very near equality with Him. As the Karma Marga does not seek to extinguish desire but only substitutes higher and higher objects of desire, even in the highest region, the Satya loka, the aspirant still retains his aptitude for desire though he may not desire such small things as we are apt to. The higher state of non-desire is strictly speaking a negative state, but to influence the aspirant to pass on to that stage he has to be taught in the words of his own familiar vocabulary that the state of non-desire is more "desirable" than even the pleasures of Satyaloka and that the latter are but an infinitesimal fraction of that supreme pleasure or blissful happiness. Thus far alone is the Karma Marga competent to take the aspirant.

SENSE OF DESIRABILITY.

23. (v). The abaudonmet of समीचीनत्वधी or sense desirability cannot be brought about by any such cajoling

process as has been found possible in the previous stages. Only the process of analytical thought, the Jnana Marga, is now open to us. It attacks the problem from both the sides by suggesting for our analysis the two questions "Am I imperfect without the thing?" and "Can the thing make me perfect?" and answers both the questions in the negative. As I have touched upon these questions already a little and may have occasion to consider them later on, I shall pass on to the next stage.

SENSE OF DISTINCTNESS.

24 (vi). The sense of imperfection in the person and the sense of competence of the thing before him to make him perfect, which are respectively due to a mistaken identification of the real person with an imperfect non-person and to a mistaken investiture of the mere thing with extraneous attributes borrowed from the person, can disappear only when the mistake disappears, and the mistake will disappear only when the true nature of the person and of the thing as such, as separate from each other, is actually realised; and they *are* seen in our study so far, to be really distinct from each other, in fact so distinct that there can be no sort of relationship between them. Thus we have arrived at the end of the first step towards the realisation of the absolute non-dualism of the Vedanta. You may remember that the three further steps are the realisations of the identity of the thing with the Transcendent Being and the identity of the person with that being and finally of that Being along being absolutely real neither person nor thing. When we are considering those steps you will find that, though we have been talking of the absolute distinction between a person and a thing as the highest stage of the first step, this absoluteness is only relative and that the truth is that, so long as the person retains the sense of *I* in himself and *this* in the thing, he is not free from a touch of the thing or non-person and that, so long as the thing retains the attribute of *this*, it cannot be unrelated to a person; so that logically speaking, the person and the thing can never remain unrelated to each other and, if they should attempt to break off that relationship, they will cease to remain as person and as thing but will merge into a common Essence of whom you cannot say that it knows or enjoys for these are the characteristics of a person alone, nor that it is known or enjoyed for these are the characteristics of a thing alone, but of whom you can predicate only that it exists, for that alone is the common attribute of a person and a thing.

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No elaborate course of argument is needed to demonstrate that the theatre is or ought to be a great popular educator. An ideal stage is a miniature world in which there is much that is interesting, entrancing and suggestive. It furnishes countless lessons of positively exalted moral worth and significance— lessons than which there is nothing better to elevate the mind, puriffy the heart and ennoble the life. The scenes and events therein portrayed and recited vividly and impressively appeal even to the most unlettered and unimpassioned of audiences. We lose ourselves in a world of artificial creations, which, for the time being, has greater interest for us than the world of realities itself. The whole of the salient features of the life-histories of individuals, high or low, rich or poor, god-fearing or wicked, pass before us with all the incredible swiftness of the scenes of a cinematograph and leave us gaping, and wondering as to how a single human head could bring these features together and with such artistic skill. The stage of the right kind is thus the haven for tempest-tossed souls; the sage, philosopher and friend of those that need guidance through the thorny path of life; the cool and refreshing drink which quenches the parching thirst of sustained action on the battle-field of life; the sequestered and sweet-scented vale which offers a feast of nectar to the tired eye and to an imagination sicklied over with the pale cast of thought; the spiring-time that sends forth the flowers of rhetoric and eloquence; the kind foster-mother of the arts of painting, music and poetry; and the celestial spark that ignites the train of the aesthetic emotions. In short, the interest and usefulness of the theatre are as paramount and perennial as those of the long line of humanity itself.

The question of the high and lasting reputation of a stage, brings us into touch chiefly and fundamentally with the intrinsic worth of the dramatic works upon which its activities are based. The works of Shakspeare and Kalidasa have, for generations, been the pets of students of literature, to the same extent as, if not to a greater degree than to stage-goers. For the cultured mind delights not much in theatrical accessories. What it really delights in is firstly the deep insight displayed in a dramatic work into human nature, into the vexed problems of life and into the irony of fate that often baffles a rational explanation of mundane incidents in the light of the accepted theory of a divine and impartial government; secondly, the naturalness of the incidents that are crowded together in the said dramatic work; thirdly, the due sense of proportion displayed in the treatment of such incidents; and last but not least, the literary skill and the chaste and lofty thought and diction which make the dramatic work, a work for all time. Dramatic productions of this sort are almost *nil* at the present day in India. In the general scrambling for wealth and animal comforts, nobody has the time for deep thinking and for slow and mature production. A number of needy loafers will be found banded together here and there, into so-called dramatic troupes and playing out their hackneyed stories in town after town and exhibiting their own attachment to the bottle or to other filthy things, above every thing else. What a degeneration from the ideal of the dramatic art held out by *Sakuntala?*

Coming to the classical dramatic productions of India, we find that there is no tragic end in them. The Indian heart revolts against leaving unrighteousness on the throne as the master of the situation. The Karma doctrine of the Hindus says indeed that as ye sow, ye reap and whoever sows the wind reaps the whirlwind. But it tells us at the same time that, as a rule, the sowings of one earthly life are harvested only in the succeeding earthly life of the soul. The Indian drama however would not, as it could not afford to suspend the retribution for wrong and the compensation for injured right, to another earth life. It is prompt, quick and decisive in its dispensations. Nala and Damayanti, Hairschandra and Chandramati, and a host of others are launched from misery and impending death into bliss and salvation by the gods themselves who hasten to their rescue before the hand of malicious persecution is allowed to deal its final stroke upon them. The *Denx ex machina* is perhaps too patient in such cases. But the Indian dramatist, like his brother the Indian priest, counts upon the easy credulity of the public and sets his tune accordingly. We all know that nowhere else in the world than in India do the theories of spiritual manifestations, clairvoyances, talks with primeval Mahatmas, admissions to divine presences, and even mere ghost stories find such ready reception even to this day. *A fortiori*, the reception accorded to such theories in the days of the production of classical dramas must have been very warm indeed. Consequently dramatists who insisted upon giving tragical conclusions to their plays, without availing themselves of the easy popular credulity that came to them so handy, would almost be counted as the enemies of mankind and they knew it well. This is why they often brought in the aid of the gods for hastening happy consummations. Dramatists like Shakspeare depicted the world as it is. Indian dramatists on the other hand depicted the world as it ought to be, where virtue had only to ask for what it wanted, in order to obtain possession of it. It is thus clear that popular beliefs, tendencies, tastes and sentiments have very much to do with the trend of dramatic productions. In short, the former are the bed-rock on which the latter are built.

When we consider that almost anything that goes by the name of drama attracts large audiences in these days, pro-

vided only that its passage through the stage is set off by adventitious attractions, such as musical achievements or of lights, gorgeous, imposing and costly scenic arrangements, or even by mere trumpery or flaunting, it will be obvious in what restless, excited and decrepit times we live, when the goal and the independent activity based on a sound discrimination are nothing and an aimless rush under the impulse of the sheep-instinct of blind following is everything. If greater proof of this statement be wanting, we have only to remember how many scamps, K. D's, loafers, vagabonds and jail-birds have found in modern Indian theatre a ready asylum, what fortunes some of them have amassed in a few years, how stale and monotonous the performances have become through repeated acting by one rival troupe or another, what low passions they excite by the public exhibition of that fondness between the sexes which figures so largely and vulgarly in the well-known Tamil play of *Thara Sasangam*, and how much these debased actors and actresses have vitiated the atmosphere of towns and cities and sown the seeds of epidemic or chronic diseases therein.

It will be seen from the above that the cultivation and development of the Indian drama and the purification and improvement of our stage are vital and that they form a proper field for the employment of talent and culture. Seeing that the drama serves as a powerful lever for purposes of a sound liberal education, the provision of good plays and their proper acting on the stage require great thought and effort. Besides stimulating intending actors into achieving good scenic and artistic effects by appropriate acting, we must, to begin with, try to present in refined but not too exceissive taste all our national and traditionary stories and folklore. In composing none but elevating dramas, in systematising, simplifiying and presenting whatever of good there is in the old *Natakams* of the country, a great work lies before our educated and cultured men. Vast materials abound all round. Much histrionic talent too is lost because of the want of dramatic societies systematically working upon adequate outlays of capital, instead of upon money and materials borrowed from pawn brokers and shylockian skinflints who take hypothecations even of forward profits and who mercilessly crush our insolvent troupes or actors on their failure to repay. The Madras Suguna Vilas Sabha is an organisation in the right direction and is refreshing free from the silly and ephemeral attractions of the professional stage.

If these stray suggestions would bring out full many gem of purest ray serene from the dark unfathomed caves of the ocean which bear them, if they lead to the sweetness of many a flower diffusing itself in peasants' cots as well as in princes, halls, instead of wasting itself in the desert air, the aims of this humble and nowise expert writer would have been amply fulfilled.

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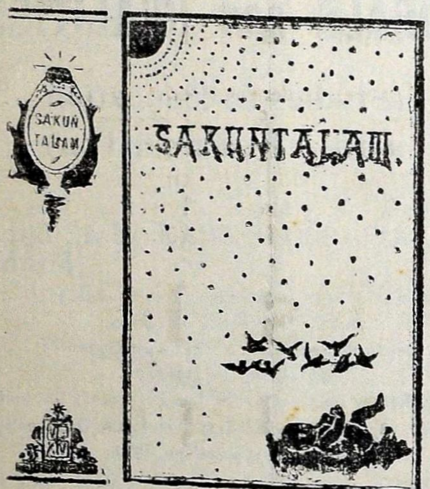

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